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20 December 2016

**IUCN Evaluation of Qinghai Hoh Xil – Nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List
Progress report on IUCN evaluation and request for supplementary information**

Dear Ambassador,

Further to the above nomination to the World Heritage List, I am writing with information on progress with the IUCN evaluation. As noted in previous correspondence, IUCN seeks to develop and maintain a dialogue with States Parties during the evaluation process of all nominations. As per the Operational Guidelines (paragraph 149 and Annex 6 - *Evaluation procedures of the Advisory Bodies for nomination*), this letter also provides the short interim report outlining the status and any issues relevant to evaluations, which is requested to be sent by IUCN before 31 January 2017.

The IUCN World Heritage technical evaluation mission to Qinghai Hoh Xil was undertaken by Mr Carlo Ossola and Mr Chimed-Ochir Bazarsad from 28 October to 6 November 2016. The evaluators greatly appreciated the excellent support and co-operation provided by your colleagues in the preparation and implementation of the mission, and the kind welcome of the State Party throughout the mission. Please convey our sincere thanks to all of the officials, scientists and contributors that assisted the mission.

The IUCN World Heritage Panel is in the course of examining World Heritage nominations for natural and mixed properties, and cultural landscapes. This process will conclude in March/April 2017, following which the IUCN evaluation report will be issued to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. At its first meeting held in the week of 5 December 2016, the IUCN Panel examined in detail each nomination dossier, reports and desktop reviews of field evaluators and external reviewers, as well as other references regarding the nominated properties.

The Panel greatly appreciated the efforts that have been made in relation to this nomination, and will be discussing the nomination again at the second meeting of the IUCN World Heritage Panel, to be held in March 2017. At this stage, the Panel noted a number of points where additional information is required, and we would be grateful for the State Party's response on the following points:

1. Please provide the evidence-based rationale (supported with clear updated maps) behind the property configuration (boundary definition, inclusion of areas within the nominated property versus the buffer zone etc.) in regard to its role in providing critical habitats for the endemic and threatened species and to protect other values. As one specific question, please outline the rationale for the exclusion of a significant proportion of the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve, given its very high levels of endemism. Furthermore, the rationale for not including within the nomination areas the adjacent Chang Tang and Altunshan Nature Reserves in adjoining Provinces considering their crucial importance for conservation of endemic and threatened flora and fauna as well as the migration routes and cycles of key species. The IUCN World Heritage Panel noted that in terms of values, there may be case for additional parts of these protected areas to be included in the nominated property, and would wish to hear the State Party's opinion on that possibility.
2. Please clarify the justification of the exclusion of major sections of the transport/development corridor (including the railway, road and powerlines) from the nominated property (and thus included within the buffer zone) along with the future development plans for possible changes in this corridor to ensure and increase connectivity for migratory species in the property, and to prevent damage from activities in the corridor. The World Heritage Panel is particularly interested to have information about plans related to the motorway, which is understood to be proposed for future upgrade.

3. Please would the State Party obtain and share the positions and levels of support from each of the Provincial government authorities of adjacent provinces that are not included in the nomination property, notably Xizang and Xinjiang, in regards to the nomination of the property for World Heritage status. Please also clarify further the situation regarding the northern boundary of the nominated property which has no buffer zone and lies along the Kunlun Mountains Range, specifically to elaborate on why a buffer zone is not considered necessary and also the position of the local government regarding levels of support for the nomination.
4. The Panel noted that concerns had been raised during the mission that there should not be any forced relocation or exclusion of the traditional users of the nominated property, including nomadic pastoralists. Please could you provide a reassurance that the State Party is committed to not displacing or resettling the local pastoralists either before or after the possible inscription of the property on the World Heritage List.
5. Please provide full information on the plans of the State Party to develop an integrated monitoring system to address the impacts of development infrastructure such as the transportation corridor, and also to monitor the impacts of climate change on the values of the nominated property.
6. Please provide full information on the current and future plans and policies to limit the practice of Pika poisoning programmes, as well as further information on anti-poaching programmes within the property, and a confirmation that these plans and policies are being, and will continue to be, implemented effectively.

We would appreciate your response to the above points as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the evaluation process, but **no later than the 28 February 2017**, as per paragraph 148 of the Operational Guidelines. Please note that any information submitted after this date will not be considered by IUCN in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while IUCN will carefully consider any supplementary information submitted, it cannot properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or large amounts of new information submitted at the last minute. So we request to keep your response concise and respond only to the above requests.

Supplementary information should be submitted officially in three copies to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in order for it to be registered as part of the nomination. An electronic copy of any supplementary information to both the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (a.balsamo@unesco.org) and IUCN Headquarters (christelle.perruchoud@iucn.org) would also be helpful.

Taking into account your response, IUCN will formulate its final recommendation to the World Heritage Committee which will meet from 2 to 12 July 2017 in Krakow, Poland.

In the interest of ensuring full transparency and dialogue regarding the IUCN evaluation process, we are happy to respond to any questions you may wish to raise regarding IUCN's work on the World Heritage Convention, including the above points. I am traveling to Paris on a regular basis and could be available to meet if this would be helpful, or would be pleased to organise a meeting via skype or conference call as an alternative. I would also emphasise that both you or your representatives are also most welcome to visit IUCN's headquarters in Switzerland to meet in person if you wish, on this nomination, or on any other matter of interest.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ms Christelle Perruchoud, World Heritage Evaluations and Operations Officer (Tel: +41 22 999 0358; Fax: +41 22 999 0002; email: christelle.perruchoud@iucn.org) if you have any questions regarding this request, or if you would wish to arrange a meeting or phone call to discuss this request.

Please allow me to reiterate our thanks for your support of the World Heritage Convention and for the conduct of IUCN's recent mission. We look forward to your kind cooperation in furnishing responses to the abovementioned points.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Badman
Director - World Heritage Programme

cc. National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO, Mr Du Yue, Secretary-General
UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Mr Feng Jing and Mr Alessandro Balsamo
IUCN Asia Regional Office, Ms Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director